

# Kurdish Contemporary Literature in Search for Ordo Amoris -Some Reflections on the Continuity of the Kurdish Literary Tradition and Ethics-\*

Wêjeya Kurdî ya Nûjên  
li Ordo Amorîs Digere  
-Çend Pirs li Ser Berdewamiya Kevneşopiya  
Edebî û Exlaqî ya Kurdî-

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## ABSTRACT:

Kurdish contemporary literature is often analyzed by the prism of the national identity ideas. However, as exemplified many times in novels and short stories identity can not be separated from ethical and philosophical

dimensions of human reality. Being based on Max Scheler's concept, *ordo amoris*, this article concentrates on the hierarchy of values, which seems a very meaningful continuation of ethic and literary tradition that has formed Kurdish culture for a long time. According to Max Scheler it is the distortion of harmonious "order of Love" that can make a visible sense of it. By exploring the state of weakness and many dark sides of man's soul by the prism of its oral, classical and mystical background Kurdish literature becomes a part of the world's important literary heritage. However, to understand it adequately one should be aware of the still alive motifs and values constructing the continuity of Kurdish culture.

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## PUXTE:

Wêjeya Kurdî gelek car ji perspektîfên fikrên nasnameya neteweyî tê nirxandin. Lêbelê naveroka tekstên wêjeyî gelek car îspat dike ku pîrsa nasnameyê ji babetên etîkî û felsefî nikare bê veqetandin. Bingeha vê nivîsê konseptê *ordo amoris* ya fîlozofê Almanî yê Max Schelerî ye û hiyerarşîya nirxan ber bi çav dike ya ku berdewamiya taybet ya kevneşopîya wêjê û exlaqên Kurdî ji demên berê ye. Li gor Max Schelerî ev xerakirina teraza "sîstema evînê" ye ku maneya vê sîstemê derdixe holê. Wêjeya Kurdî ya nûjên bi bikaranîna tecrûbeyê edebiyata devkî û klasîk û tesewîfî li aliyên tarî û qels yên ruhê mirovî digere û ji ber vê yekê dibê perçeya giring ya mîrîsa edebiyata din-yayê. Loma ji bo nirxandina kûr ya wêjeya Kurdî ya nûjên hişyarmendiya wan motifên taybet yên ji demên berê pêdivî ye.

**Peyvên sereke:** wêjeya Kurdî ya nûjên, Kurmancî, exlaq, felsefe, nirx.

Love means to learn to look at yourself  
The way one looks at distant things  
For you are only one thing among many.  
And whoever sees that way heals his heart,  
Without knowing it, from various ills—  
A bird and a tree say to him: Friend.

Then he wants to use himself and things  
So that they stand in the glow of ripeness.  
It doesn't matter whether he knows what he serves:  
Who serves best doesn't always understand.

Czesław Miłosz

## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the 20th century for many Kurdish authors writing in Kurdish became an important way to confirm their own national identity. However, as stressed by Darînê Daryo - the main character of one of Hesênê Metê's short stories, creating literature is not only a question of ideology, politics or family honor but first of all it should answer the writer's deep need to tell the story and to do it in the best possible way. This is the very important moment when literature becomes both: philosophical or an ethical problem to resolve and subtle art of composition. It is

not a coincidence that ethical issues have been presented by the prism of literature, especially character's choices, behavior and dilemmas, not only by writers but philosophers as well to give the example of Alasdair MacIntyre's<sup>1</sup> remarks on Homer and Jane Austen's novels. Contemporary Kurdish literature can be a great example of seeking foundations for the system of values that is defined in this article following Max Scheler's<sup>2</sup> *ordo amoris* term.

## 2. ORDO AMORIS OF MAX SCHELER

In some inevitable simplification Scheler's *ordo amoris* (Scheler's translation: "the order of love and hatred") can be regarded as the hierarchy based on the multidimensional meaning of Love, which governs the understanding of other values. *Ordo amoris* is not only the system of norms being given by someone (God), but is very much determined by human will. However, unquestionably, such Love is understood by Scheler, as the element of transcendental (or God's) order and that is why it is considered an objective quality not only subjective feeling of an individual. Such objective "order of love" is contrasted with rational philosophy postulate of objectivity based only on reason, which to Scheler rashly neglects the importance of other sphere of human spirit activity. The main human aim to follow should be to love in a way God loves. This way the act of God and human love can unify in one point of the world of values. *Ordo amoris* hierarchy consists of things "being worth our love", which is not static and invariable but dynamic and an evolving kind of structure. Love and hate are understood as the primeval acts, preconditions for any cognition and knowledge. We always love or hate something and that is why *ordo amoris* creates the basis for human choices, wishes, customs and deeds. Such structure can be created as well as distorted by all individuals and

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- 1 Alasdair MacIntyre (1929), Scottish philosopher known for his critic on liberal modernity. Previously inspired by Marxism than returned to Aristotelian tradition attempting to revive it by so called "peculiarly modern understanding". The ethics and political philosophy become to be the central focus of his interests. His most acclaimed work *After virtue* was published in 1981 being the analysis of – as he thinks - lost legacy of the ancient virtue tradition. He was criticized by Polish philosopher Jacek Filek for neglecting the great heritage of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century German and Eastern Europe philosophical tradition.
  - 2 Max Scheler (1874-1919), German philosopher, known for his contribution to phenomenology, ethics, and philosophical anthropology. His thesis devoted to *ordo amoris* was written in 1916, after his most important publication entitled *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*. It was planned as the part of bigger work *Ordo amoris und seinen Verwirrungen*, however was never finished.

societies. Making *ordo amoris* visible, considering its inner structure, hierarchy and – what is most important – its points of distortions – seems to Scheler crucial in understanding the deep dimension of each individual, social and national life. (Scheler 2013, p. 15-47) Following this concept I intend to analyze selected motives of Kurdish (Kurmanji dialect) oral and literary tradition. Max Scheler's *ordo amoris* is a good example of Western term and concept that can be suitable and to some extent compatible with Eastern (here – mainly Yezidi or Muslim) ethical experiences. It can be understood by the common heritage of thoughts called “classical Greek tradition” which Europeans selfishly use to covet for themselves. One of the very significant common elements seems to be the legacy of Aristotelian ethics and Neo-Platonism. Especially neoplatonic hierarchy of hypostasies is the most significant. It can be traced both in Yezidism, Islam (Sufism) and in Scheler's ethics, where the concept of hierarchy (order) of values unified by God-Love idea plays the crucial role. However, similar to other theories Scheler's term must be applied firstly to awareness and concern with the reality to which it is addressed.

### 3. THE ROLE OF ORAL AND CLASSICAL TRADITION IN FORMING KURDISH CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE QUESTS FOR VALUES

Kurdish tradition of telling stories abounds in ethical issues. The process of telling fairy tales and legends by storytellers – *çirokbêj* / *dengbêj*<sup>3</sup> was a kind of moral education, where not only direct hints but rather the example of deeds and the listener's emotional identification with characters plays a crucial role in understanding the meaning of good and evil. MacIntyre and Bettelheim emphasized the role of heroic stories and fairy tales in moral education and in obtaining maturity<sup>4</sup>. For the first it was the patterns of the protagonists' deeds that provided the ability to recognize true and false and to act in the most proper way.<sup>5</sup> For the second,

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- 3 The word *çirokbêj* is much more appropriate because it literarily means the storyteller. *Dengbêj* was rather a bard or a singer. However in contemporary Kurdish cultural reality the term *dengbêj* seems to be applied – following the way Mehmed Uzun uses it in his novels and essays – for any kind of Kurdish storyteller.
  - 4 Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990), Jewish-American child psychologist and writer, born in Austria. Applying Freudian psychology, he analyzed selected fairy tales in his best-known book *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976). He revived the meaning of dreadful fantasy showing that dark motifs such as witch, death, abandonment and injuries help children to grapple with their own fears and problems hidden deep in their sub-consciousness.
  - 5 According to the Scottish philosopher, one's character “can only be exhibited in a succession of incidents and the succession itself must exemplify certain patterns. So to understand courage as a virtue is not just to understand how it may be exhibited in character, but also what place it can have in a certain kind of enacted story.” (MacIntyre 1985, p.125)

whose interests were focused rather on psychological dimensions, fairy tales with its multidimensional structure of combating the evil could be a kind of therapy for children who are unable to grasp the abstract way of thinking and resolving problems. Due to such therapy a child was enabled to gain wise moral maturity (Bettelheim 1985, p. 39). As we can explore in Kurdish fairy tale structure, which was also emphasized by Mehmet Uzun in the context of Kurdish culture, storytelling could be considered a kind of common therapy and cure in many hopeless situations (Bocheńska 2011, p. 54).

However we can not discuss the role of Kurdish oral tradition without mentioning the rich Yezidi tradition. In this field it is indispensable to point out Philip Kreyenbroek and Khalil Jindy Rashow's anthology and analysis of Yezidi diverse texts. Their role in forming Yezidi sacred history, esoteric and exoteric reality and ethics was stressed many times. First of all, it's useful to remember "Yezidi sacred history is topical and memorable, rather than linear and objective. It relates those events which are thought to be most important for a Yezidi to know, largely disregarding the element of linear time." (Kreyenbroek, Rashow 2005, p. 19). Considering it in the context of MacIntyre and Bettelheim remarks the "topical and memorable history" can be seen as the best fitting one for the goals of moral education. It consists of images and incidents that represent certain meaningful patterns of proper behavior. For the purpose of this article I will allow myself the comparison between Yezidi esoteric and exoteric knowledge based on the creative, life-giving power of Love (Kreyenbroek, Rashow 2005, p. 28) with Scheler's concept of *ordo amoris*. According to the German philosopher Love is also the God given, creative, dynamic power of life which is building the hidden structure of individual and social hierarchy of values. However, it is rather the distortion of this structure than its harmonious order that reveals the meaning of human fate and lot (Scheler 2013, p. 18).

Following the Kurdish oral tradition we can find ethical issues in classical Kurdish literature as well. Seeking the source of good and evil is one of Ehmede Khani's basic concerns in his immortal *Mem û Zîn*. Ethic presented in his work was based on sophisticated structure of events, main personages detailed description, monologues and dialogues rather than on abstract discourse. However, the latter was not missing, taking into consideration the introduction and the final part of the work. Following Muslim and -as very plausible- Yezidi tradition<sup>6</sup> Khani had built the

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6 The introduction of *Mam û Zîn* presents the Khani's work as the part of Muslim cultural and literary heritage. However there are some motifs which irrefutably suggest that the links with Yezidi tradition are justified too. As far as we do not know and can only presume that Khani could have known Yezidi texts and tradition it seems better to call the links "plausible". They can

significant *ordo amoris*, which in many points can be compared with the Scheler concept of internal order guiding the individual and social life. I present it here regarding the pole structure of good and evil forming the plot of *Mem û Zîn*. Again; it is the distortion of harmonious order, which became meaningful in his work:

### **I. The source and role of evil are defined and revealed by:**

#### **1. Analyzing the reason of Kurdish and – in general – man's failures:**

a. The ruler, mir Zeid (i. e. prince Zeid), is guided only by his ambitions and therefore he is susceptible to Satan's whispers. For him gaining and maintaining power are the main values to follow.

b. The Kurdish lack of humility is the reason for their susceptibility to quarrels and disobedience. That is also the main obstacle that precludes gaining national unity.

#### **2. The introduction of Satan himself as Bekir, the ruler's adviser.**

3. Seeing evil as the crucial element of the world's order planned by God. That is why Bekir turned out to be God's envoy and his deeds are forgiven.

4. Seeing the responsibility of men – it is the ruler mir Zeid not Bekir who is responsible for bad deeds as he himself yields to his own weaknesses. Bekir is just using him.

### **II. Sources and role of good are defined and revealed by:**

#### **1. Stressing the role of Love which is presented in a very multidimensional way, by:**

a. The story of the lovers Mem and Zin,

b. The story of friendship: Mam and Tacdin, Zin and Siti

c. The idea of patriotism and Khani's decisive postulate to build unity not only on the power of the sword but also on its cultural heritage and language

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be traced in *Mam û Zîn*. I wish to point at few of them which I think are of considerable importance. The first one is the Khani's description of Satan, which we can find in the introduction. The Satan is presented rather as "tragic" not just "evil" creature. Khani stresses his faithfulness to God so the associations with Tawûsê Melek seem justified. The poet goes even further by personifying Satan as Bekir who is finally forgiven and understood as God envoy. But the most important element is the Khani's God-Love idea which crowns his work. It seems also inspired by Yezidi tradition where Love was the main feature and instrument of God. Love (*eşq* and *mihbet*) is mentioned many times in Yezidi texts while not so often in Quran and sunnah. It can be found in other sufi traditions too but taking into consideration Kurdish ethnic links with Yezidism as well as the meaningful combination of all aforementioned motifs we can definitely presume that the Yezidi tradition inspirations can be revealed in *Mem û Zîn*.

d. Mysticism, based on the story of Mam and Zin's tragic unfulfilled love, which is the main reason for seeking God by both male and female characters. However, love to God became the very ambiguous cure for their misfortune. In this context God's love for a human being (and nation) is seen as a completely inexplicable phenomenon in which Bekir, as Satan, plays a special role as God's envoy.

e. Love is seen as the only value that can unify diversity, contrasts and contradictions, good and evil. In this way, the dualism of the world can be overcome.

2. Faith in God. Following Quran and Yezidi tradition faith seems to Khani the only reliable foundation for understanding God's Love towards a man and for conducting one's life in a most proper way.<sup>7</sup>

In his work Khani had constructed a meaningful literary idea of God-Love. In Yezidi, some ancient Greek and Muslim (especially in Sufism) traditions, Love was seen as the main attribute of God. According to Yezidi *qewls*<sup>8</sup> it came into being along with God at the Time of Creation manifesting itself by both - the creative power causing the multiplication of the world and by the heaven which made the earth firm and solid (Kreyenbroek, Rashow 2005, p. 28, 95). Khani had followed this concept but his literary work was based rather on revealing the distortion of such *ordo amoris*. The Kurdish prince's deeds were based not on Love but on his own ambitions and longing for power, which made him absolutely helpless against Bekir – the personified evil. However, on the other hand Bekir's activity or rather his "bad whispers" (there is no place in the poem when he really acts or does something wrong), seem to be part of God's plan. Considering evil or Satan, a significant part of God's plan needs a strong faith based on the limitless trust in God's inexplicable Love, which in Yezidi tradition is called The Mystery of Love.

Being based on both Yezidi and Muslim oral and classical tradition such *ordo amoris* has formed the significant heritage for contemporary Kurdish literature. As we can see further it is certainly the distortion of such "love order" which troubles modern day writers.

7 For thorough analysis of Khani's work look for example: Resul, M.I. (2007) *Bir şair Düşünür ve Mutasavvıf olarak Ehmedê Xani ve Mem û Zîn*, İstanbul: Avesta

8 The term *qewl* is understood here after Philip Kreyenbroek and refers to *qewls* published in a book edited by him and Rashow's book. Philip Kreyenbroek states: "unlike Western 'genre', the Yezidi categories *Qewl*, *Beyt*, and *Qeside* appear to be based largely on tradition: one knows a texts belongs to one of these categories because one has been thought to define it as such. The category of poem cannot be deduced from such features as rhyme or metre, and content may at best provide an indication". (Kreyenbroek, Rashow, 2005: 48).

#### 4. KURDISH CONTEMPORARY WRITERS AND THEIR WAYS TO REVEAL *ORDO AMORIS*.

Mehmed Uzun<sup>9</sup> was one of the Kurdish writers who had seen the necessity of undertaking the tradition of the storyteller's heritage and adapting it to the contemporary conditions of Kurdish literature. In his novel *Rojek ji rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (*A Day from Evdalê Zeynikê's Days*) he stressed the role of some values that to him need to be applicable by *dengbêj*. Interesting that it has a form of direct hints given by Evdalê Zeynikê to his pupils:

Şagiritino, rûgeşino, bi xwe bawer, bi zimane xwe şêrin, bi dengê xwe xweş, bi gotina xwe fesih û sivik bin. Hunermendi; daxwaz, coş, sebir, înad, xebat, nermî û ziravbihistiyari ye. Bila çar tişt ji we kêm nebin; jiri û ciwanmerdî comerdî û xêrxwazî. Bila çar tişt ji we bi dûr bin; qelsî û namerdî, çikosî û xirabixwazî. Ev her çar tişt, jiri, ciwanmerdî, comerdî û xêrxwazî dê alikari li hunermendiya we bike. Gava hûn bi xwe û bi gotina xwe ne bawer in, mebebîn. Li serê bixebitin, lê hûr bin da ku hûn pê bawer dibin. Gava gotin û stran we nahejine, kela dilê we hîlnade û bi germî ruhê we venagire, hingê hûn wê gotin û stranê mebebîn (Uzun 2002, p. 59).

Pupils of bright faces, believe in yourself, use kind language, a sweet voice and the open and light way of telling. The creation consists of will, enthusiasm, patience, obstinacy, hard work, gentleness and sensitivity. Four things should not be lacking: cleverness and nobleness, generosity and goodness. But beware of four things: the lack of will and courage, avarice and malice. These four features, I mean: cleverness and nobleness, generosity and goodness will help your art. If you do not believe in yourself and your words do not tell the stories. Work on them, try to understand their deep meaning to be able to believe them. If the song or story does not move you, or touch your heart, or warm your soul, then do not tell it.<sup>10</sup>

It seems that contemporary Kurdish literature has maintained tradition, considering writing stories as a kind of "moral education". However, it has to be pointed out at the very beginning that it is based on dealing with concerns, rather than on instructions. It is not the hints of how to live a good and happy life, but rather

9 Mehmed Uzun, (1953-2007) was born in Siwerek in Northern part of Kurdistan (Turkey). A - claimed Kurdish novelist, one of the first Kurdish language writers who became to be known to wider Kurdish audience and abroad. For many years lived in exile in Sweden. He is the author of several novels: *Tu* (You, 1985), *Mirina Kaleki Rind* (The Death of the Beautiful Old Man, 1987), *Siya Evinê* (The Shadow of Love, 1989), *Rojek ji rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê, 1991), *Bira Qederê* (The Well of Fate [memory of destiny??], 1995), *Ronî Mina Evinê* *Tarî Mina Mirinê* (The Light like Love, The Dark like Death, 1998), *Hawara Dicleyê* (The Call of The Tigris River, 2001,2003).

10 All translations from Kurmanji to English of the modern Kurdish prose have been done by the author of this article.



questions of whether the good and happy life is possible and what does it mean. Moreover, the aim of those questions seems to be awakening doubts in communities where many values are traditionally given and undisputed. Awakening doubts are crucial to the process of the rethinking of values, which troubles contemporary Kurdish writers such as Hesenê Metê, Firat Cewerî or Jan Dost. Such reinterpretation is based on revealing the distortion of the *ordo amoris*, by exploring the dark side of the human soul and of many social phenomena. However, it is also important to underline the role of self-confidence (believing in yourself) in the aforementioned piece of Mehmed Uzun's work. Self-confidence is crucial in the true understanding of other values. Is it right to ask whether it is contradictory to the process of awakening doubts, as mentioned above?

It is true that Uzun's works concentrates more on raising Kurdish spirits, awakening confidence in the Kurdish cultural heritage and history. In this point they can be compared with many Polish romanticism poets and writer's works when Poland was under partition and awakening national spirit and sustaining all things Polish was such a fundamental aim for literature. It was not Mehmed Uzun's concern to "raise doubts" although we can find many questions in some of his works. But Uzun's words considering self-confidence, are directed at the storytellers (and writers – as we can guess) "as human beings" then to the content of their stories. It seems that the art of storytelling (writing) can not be separated from certain ethical values which are listed. The content should be "close" and "understandable" to the storyteller, which sets up the basic precondition for creating a convincing story. Interestingly, this approach corresponds with Max Scheler's concept of resentment as the source of many illusory values. The lack of self-confidence and frustration seems crucial in understanding the distortion of *ordo amoris* as seen by contemporary Kurdish writers. To Scheler the state of resentment has its source in the unfulfilled will of revenge for some harm one has suffered from someone. When vengeance can not be executed and is consequently suppressed because of the feeling of helplessness or the lack of self-confidence, it becomes a kind of poison which gradually influences human spirit turning it into envy, malice, derision, sorrow and even hatred. If such a condition can not be overcome with time or forgiveness it creates the long-lasting state of resentment which affects one's relations with other people and society. It results in creating illusory values which justify one's own weakness, envy and finally - bad deeds (Scheller 1977, p. 34-54). Curiously, in the Quran and in Muslim tradition in general it is envy which is regarded as one of the main sources of evil and hostility among people, for example in the 113 surah of the Quran (Al-Falaq / The Daybreak):

## In the Name of Allah

### The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

1. Say: I seek refuge with (Allah), the Lord of the daybreak
2. From the evil of what He has created,
3. And from the evil of the darkening (night) as it comes with its darkness; (or the moon as it sets or fades away)
4. And from the evil of those who practice witchcraft when they blow in the knots,
5. And from the evil of the envier when he envies (Quran: 868).

The ambition of mir Zeid and the process of creating illusory values which has been so magnificently shown by Khani can be interpreted as the fruit of mir Zeid's jealousy and envy too as he is afraid of the two brave heroes Tajdin and Mem, whom he perceived as "more perfect and loved by people". That is why – in his opinion – they can be a threat to his throne. My remarks on resentment, illusory values, jealousy and envy coincide with contemporary Kurdish literature which highlights weakness and frustration in trying to grasp its reasons and influence on human life. In the context of Scheler's concepts it can be interpreted as the thorough analysis of the *ordo amoris* distortions as well as the quest for *ordo amoris* itself. Following Uzun's conviction that telling stories can be a kind of cure for a storyteller or writer, we ask if writing and the job of a writer can be perceived as an aesthetically sophisticated way of escaping resentment?

Firat Ceweri's<sup>11</sup> book *Ezê yekî bikujim* (I will kill someone), is quite a convincing analysis of the human state of resentment and hatred. To some extent it can be compared with Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* or Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* where the main character became a kind of anti-hero<sup>12</sup>. It gives the author the good possibility to study the state of resentment and hatred. Ceweri's inspiration of Dostoyevsky is visible and directly mentioned in his works. I don't think it will be an exaggeration to regard the anti-hero as the important motif of

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11 Firat Ceweri, (1959) born in Dêrik in Northern part of Kurdistan (Turkey). Since 80thies he has been leaving in Sweden. He worked as translator and the editor of well known Kurdish literary journal *Nûdem*. He is the author of many short stories and novels including: *Kevoka Spi* (The White Pigeon, 1996), *Payiza Dereng* (The Late Outumn, 2005), *Ez yekî bikujim* (I will kill someone, 2008), *Lehi* (The Flood, 2011).

12 Antihero is usually thought a kind of protagonist who has little or no heroic virtues or qualities. In Western literature this category was born in Romantic epoch from Byron's hero. In Russian literature we can find prototypes of it in works of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoyevsky or Goncharov. *Notes from Underground* and *A Hero of Our Times* are known especially for their antiheroes.

contemporary Kurdish (especially Kurmanji dialect) literature. It is rooted both in folklore and in classical Kurdish tradition by the study of the state of weakness. Traditionally many fairy tales tell the story of small younger brothers who are finally able to face their biggest danger (Bettelheim had seen it as a hint for younger children), and Khani's personages of Mam and Zîn are shown as incorrigible dreamers and even melancholics unable to take up any action. Definitely, we can not call them anti-heroes but it will be useful to mention the continuation of literary interests placed on "weak" and not on "enterprising and resourceful characters". Exploring the weakness and wickedness of the human soul can also be another significant way of revealing the lack or the distortion of *ordo amoris*. Similar tradition of the anti-hero or so-called "small man" was born in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian prose. It has its direct influence on the ethical dimension of literary works.

The character of the aforementioned Ceweri's novel is presented as an anonymous inhabitant of a contemporary Kurdish city in Turkey, which, as we can presume, is Diyarbakir. We learn something about Ceweri's hero in the beginning and then more is revealed gradually and sparingly. We do not know his name (it is revealed in the second part of the novel called *Lehî*, The Flood). We know that he was released from jail after 15 years spent in a hard Turkish prison. He was involved in the Kurdish opposition movement possibly in the 80's or 90's. He is living as an outsider with his mother. He decided to cut all other links with his family, friends and the city's contemporary reality. One day he awakes with the decision to kill somebody. It is his inner voice, which orders him. He is convinced that the voice must be followed undisputedly. He sets out from home wandering in the big city to find somebody to kill. But all the people he meets are "inappropriate" although he feels hostility towards them. Now, we ask if his intention is really the manifestation of his will or just the voice of resentment and hatred?

The reasons of Ceweri's character's resentment and depression seem multiple. They are revealed to the reader through his monologue and are based on his powerlessness, which is seen by Scheler as one of the main sources of resentment. They can be ordered as follows:

1. Outward - of historical or social character:

- a. Failure of the Kurdish opposition movement,
- b. Changes of city and its inhabitants: visible pursuit for modernity and money, neglecting moral and national values (everyone on the streets speaks Turkish)

2. Inner – of personal or spiritual character:

- a. Personage's loneliness and feeling powerlessness rooted deep in his spirit and life experiences

**b. Seeking for absolute freedom which can be illustrated by the following fragment:**

Ez ê ji bo kuştina nêçira xwe bisteke din derkevim derve û lê bigerim. Ez zanim ez ê yeki bikujim, lê ez ê her kesi nekujim. Divê ê ku ez bikujim, ez bi xwe hilbijêrim, ne ku ew min hilbijêre. Heta niha, di jiyana xwe de min qet hilnebijartiye, hertim hatime hilbijartin. Min biryar nedane, hertim li dû biryaran tevgeriyame. Lê iro, encama xewna min, ê min ji vê rewşê rizgar bike. (Cewerî, 2008, p. 21)

In a minute I will set out on killing my prey. I know I will kill somebody but it won't be anybody. I need to choose my prey, he should not choose me. Until now in my life I have never chosen anything, I have been chosen all the time. I have never taken any decisions, I have followed decisions of others, but today, as the result of my dream, I will be freed from this condition.

Love for evil and "bad things" comes from the conviction to absolute freedom.

Gava ez iro yeki bikujim, ez lê binêrim bê çawa ruh jê diçe û daxwaza wî a dawî çî ye?

Çima gunehê min ê pê bê? Ma Xwedê rojê bi çendan zarokên xwe nakuje? Ew jî ne tene bi kêrê, wan bi her celebî dike. Hina dişewtine, hina di avê de dixeniqîne, bi navê kanserê pencê xwe davêje hina û nûçeya jî mirinê bitiristir digihîne wan; erda xwe dihejîne û malên hina bi ser wan de hildiveşîne. Hin malbatan jî kokê de qir dike. Carina pêlên derya xwe radike û evdên xwe dikişîne binê behrê. (Cewerî 2008, p. 21)

When I kill somebody today, will I watch his fleeing soul and hear his last dying wish?

Why should I be sorry for him? How many of his own children does God kill every day? And not only by the knife, He is killing them in many other ways. Some are burned by Him, some are drowned, His sunk talons go by the name of cancer and bring people the news worse than death; he shakes the earth and brings down houses on humans heads. He annihilates all families. Sometimes he raises the waves and pulls His slaves into the sea.

Or:

Ez bawer nakim gunehê min ê bi qurbanê min bê. Ma gunehê Xwedê bi kesi tê? Haşa, ne ku ez xwe dişibînim Xwedê, lê Xwedê emir dike û ez dikim. Ma mirov dikare bêrêtiya Xwedê bike? Heke ez bêrêtiya Wî bikim, divê iro dev ji kuştina yeki berdim û li ber cogê diya xwe rûnê. (Cewerî 2008, p. 21-22)

I do not think I will feel sorry for my victim. Does God feel sorry for anyone? God forbid, I will imitate Him, but He orders and I am doing. If a man can do injustice to God? If I would commit an injustice, I should forget about killing someone and sit on my mother knees.

The second piece is certainly more ambiguous, it reveals the personage's concerns and doubts. What is this inner voice that orders him to kill somebody? Is it the free will or the will of God? What is the human natural susceptibility? To good or to evil? Maybe we can interpret it in another way. Ceweri's character desires to become equal to God that is why killing a man seems rather an extreme manifestation of his free choice. Freedom seems to be one of the main values analyzed by Ceweri both in *Ez yeki bikujim* and *Lehi* as all characters seek freedom from something. He tries to find out what it really means to be free. Being the most important Kurdish desire, freedom is always seen as a positive and even absolute value. But Ceweri definitely brings it down, showing that freedom itself can not be the most important value to live for. It is the most important motif connecting him with Dostoyevsky. Being free means also to feel free to do bad not just good. Ceweri's personage similar to Dostoyevsky's from *Notes From Underground* loves his own malice and evil. He yields to his own whims. Freedom put on the top of the system of values turns out to be the terrifying degeneration of the *ordo amoris*. In the context of the Kurdish history and cultural heritage it must be seen as the effect of colonial policy of different actors but also of alienation and rootlessness which can not be cured by the import of modern ideas and ideologies. Until meeting Diana (another, female personage) Ceweri's character has no will to face his own weakness. But what is more important he sees his own bad will as the right element of his world's order. Meeting Diana (who turns out to have been a guerilla forced to work as a prostitute) brings hope to his dark and sorrowful life. Unfortunately, he is hit by a car and cannot meet her again. However, it is his small note found by the writer (another personage) in his pocket, in which he confesses to be in love with Diana. The note catches the writer's interest and makes him keen to find and then help Diana. And so love became the main and maybe the only reason to act in the name of good. But Ceweri's solution is not so clear-cut. *Lehi* brings new questions and new doubts to think about. It is, however, out of the question that Ceweri's modern literature is the continuation of folklore, religious and classical Kurdish literature important topics. Following Yezidi tradition and Khani's idea it is Love as the main value to follow. Ceweri contrasts it with freedom when seen as the only absolute value cannot bring about good. However, it should not be understood as resignation from main Kurdish national desires. It is rather a suggestion that freedom gains its meaning along with love.

Yezidi tradition and classical Kurdish literature ethical inspirations are even more visible in Hesene Metê's<sup>13</sup> short stories and novels. First of all, it is Metê's deep

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13 Hesene Metê, born in 1957 in Erkhani in Turkish part of Kurdistan, he is living in Sweden. He

conviction that neither progress nor education is enough to bring happiness to Kurdish people. In his novel *Labirenta Cinan* (Labyrinth of Jinns) he derides Kurdish intellectuals' blind faith in the healing role of progress and education, which were believed to eventually eradicate backwardness and evil. Kevanot – the main character of this novel is an example of “a perfect teacher” coming to a Kurdish village to bring enlightenment. He is Kurdish and knows Kurdish, he has a Kurdish wife, and thorough knowledge of Kurdish customs and tradition. He is keen to change the backward reality. But at the same time his rational knowledge does not help him to understand the peasant's penchants to do bad things. He failed to change it by educating people. They do not want to change. It is Kevanot that is forced to change. This time it is the blind faith in progress and education that brings the distortion of *ordo amoris*. It should be understood as the effect of European Enlightenment tradition and the Friedrich Nietzsche's announcement of the death of God. Modern knowledge was built on the strong conviction of eradicating evil by the means of progress and education. At the same time however, as E. W. Said had convincingly shown us (Said, 2003) it became the sophisticated instrument of colonial conquer. According to Polish philosopher Jacek Filek, Nietzsche's sentence should be more thoroughly expressed: that God was killed, he didn't die (Filek 2001, p. 291). Such new expression gives birth to new understanding of knowledge and of human responsibility in the world never being free from evil. Metê too shows evil as the eternal element of the world's order. It should not be neglected. But it should not be seen as horrifying too. Hunting for evil and for “bad people” is more terrifying than evil itself. It can be compared with the Mikhail Bulgakov idea of “the big and small devil” presented in *Master and Margarite* where devils coming to Moscow are better than ordinary people living there. One can see it very clearly in Hesene Metê's story *Tofan* (The Flood, ) where he revives Khani's “bad” personage of Beko (Bekir). According to Metê's literary idea Beko is sent to earth once again as Khani's last will. He learns that his name was forgotten and even forbidden to be spoken by people living in Jazira in order to escape evil. At the same time people are listening to their leader's advice. He has no doubts who is a hero and who is a traitor. They believe him in order to live in a better world, in a world “without evil”, which he is promising them. Those who do not follow him are treated as traitors and killed. Beko is frightened because it is his name, which is

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is the author of short stories published in collections entitled *Smirnoff* (1991), *Epilog* (1998) or *Îsev* (2009) and novels *Labirenta Cinan* (The Labyrinth of Jins, 1994), *Tofan* (Flood, 2000), *Gotinên gunehkar* (Sinful stories, 2007), *Li derê* (In the church, 2011).

used by the leader to indicate “a traitor”. In the final part of the story he contrasts himself to people living in Jazira:

Hertişt. . . hertişt ku cenabe te bi pey min xistiye û di nava nifşan de belav kiriye, min hemî ji ji bo evîneke ilahî kiriye. (Metê 2006, p. 68)

All things that your excellence, has made me responsible for and known by generations, I have made for the sake of God's love.

And:

Lê ev gelacên îro, heşa ji cenabe te dibêjin meriv wan nakin ber keran. Xêr û guneh li hustuyên wan, lê dibêjin ev gelacên ku îro navê min di devê xwe de dikine benîşt, li ba wan evîn tune ye, hezkirin tune ye. . . . dev ji hezkirina yar û cîranê berde, dibêjin li ba wan meriv nikane ji dê û bavê xwe ji hez bike, dibêjin li gor wan ev tiştên wele memnu ul emel in. (Metê 2006, p. 70)

But of today's charlatans, God forgive me, they do not deserve to be one's donkeys. Good and sin on their conscience, but it tells these charlatans who made my name the chewing gum in their mouths, they have no love and no wish to love. . . . forget about lovers and neighbours, it tells that when one befriends them one can no longer love a mother and father, it tells that according to them, these things are forbidden.

This way Love begins to be the most important value again, being valuable even for Beko (God and this time also Khani's envoy). Evil is understood as an element of the world's order and man's desire to eradicate or forget it, loosing ability to see it in his own thoughts and wishes seems more dangerous than evil itself. Only love can bring meaning for the world split into good and evil. This idea is an unquestionable continuation of Khani's thoughts and of Yezidi tradition. However, it achieves a modern form in contemporary Kurdish language and novel. Writing becomes the way for reviling the dark side of the human soul, which brings writers closer to Khani's and Dostoyevsky's ideas.

The tradition of the anti-hero is very interestingly exemplified in Hesene Metê's *Êş* (The Pain) too, where a personage does not want to become a writer just because a lot of people insist on it. Darînê Daryo is an example of “anti-writer” - a person who may even desire to become a writer but is hampered by many different factors. First of all, it is his deep conviction that literature should not be written in order to gain something (fame, reputation, power or money), but because of the deep and sincere desire to say something and doing it in the best possible way. Darîne Daryo (and plausibly Metê's) credo brings him again very close to Khani's attitude revealed in the introduction to *Mem û Zîn*, when writing is declared definitely not the instrument for mercenary goals (Xani 2005, p. 175). Darîn is overwhelmed by his relatives' insis-

tence. They wish he would write a book in order to get some splendor and money. In Kurdish society (in this case mostly emigrant) it means to bring splendor for relatives and friends too. Everyone can be proud because he knows or is somehow related to the famous writer. People understand the work of art as a kind of precious thing, possession of which can be the source of family content and pride. Moreover, Darin does not feel capable enough to write a story or novel. To repeat Uzun and Scheler's words – he has some problems with self-confidence that definitely cuts his wings. In this point Metê's short story is a convincing example of a work devoted to the state of writer's impotence. However, this impotence can be eventually overcome by another personage who emerges at the end of the story, narrator's first person "I", who declare that "he will write the story". So, Metê's short story gains a dual perspective when the impotence, powerlessness as well as courage and deed come to be aesthetically and ethically meaningful. We can also regard it as one of the most interesting proposals for revealing the hidden structure of *ordo amoris*. It is the absence of a story and even the lack of capability for writing one that results in making the distorted *ordo amoris* visible again. Moreover, writing becomes the way for escaping the poisonous effect of resentment. Impotence and powerlessness are finally overcome. However, it is not Darinê Daryo but the voice of the until now non-personified narrator who becomes the actor, so the banality of a clear-cut conclusion can be avoided.

In Jan Dost's<sup>14</sup> *Mijabad* it is also the visible lack of "something" that preclude people from building their own independent state. The title and plot of the book is an obvious reference to the Mahabad Republic but the aim of the novel is definitely not to present the historical events. It can not be considered a historical novel but rather the meaningful allegory and pretext to explore human weakness and failures. In light of Hashem Ahmedzadeh's reflections considering the magic realism of Bakhtiyar Ali's novels (written in Sorani dialect of Kurdish) Jan Dost's *Mijabad* can be regarded as an example of magic realism too. It can be considered the allegory of historical events, which can contribute to the formation of identity as Ahmedzadeh defines it (Ahmedzadeh 2011, p. 293-294). The magic images such as fog<sup>15</sup>, strings being plaited for future gallows and other visions and dreams of main personages can be felt a kind of ontological disruption that serves as meaning-

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- 14 Jan Dost, Kurdish writer born in 1965 in Kobani in Western part of Kurdistan (Syria). Since 2000 he has been leaving in Germany. He is the author of several novels: *Mijabad* (2004), *3 gav û 3 adarek* (3 steps 3 Marts, 2007), *Mirname* (2008), *Martinê Bextewer* (Martin the Happy, 2012).
- 15 *Mij* means fog in Kurdish. This way *Mijabad* can be understood as the "town of fog". It refers to Mahabad's climate and weather but symbolize also the fade, foggy and weak idea of own life, future, state or just the lack of visibility of something - of some important value.



ful commentary on the political reality of the Kurds (Ahmedzadeh 2011, p. 299). However, as we can prove in the case of *Mijabad* it would be terribly insufficient to reduce the native character of such a magic realism only to the historical and social reality presented. Kurdish contemporary literature sources are deeper than the modern label of magic realism spread around the globalized world. In the case of Dost's novel the Kurdish "allegory of historical events" seems rooted in its own folklore and mystical tradition to repeat the Kreyenbroek remarks on "topical and memorable" character of history in Yezidi texts (Kreyenbroek, Rashow 2005, p. 19). It seems the main point where the so-called "Kurdish magic realism" can have its source. It is connected with the ethic dimension of the story that is being told or written rather than just with some aesthetic inspirations borrowed from other cultures or invented as the effect of postcolonial identity. It consists of meaningful images that can not be simply called "magic". These images have an important origin which strengthens the idea of the book even if their application was not a question of rational choice but rather the intuition of the writer. Of course, global magic realism inspirations or parallel postcolonial phenomena can not be excluded too.

Badin – the main character of Dost's novel – seems trapped by his own wish to write but also to take an active part in historical events. He is a man of many doubts, preferring to take part in a love affair than in war, which makes killing a sort of everyday custom. But it is not the lack of courage but rather the special condition of his soul which keeps him distant from other fighters whom he eventually joins. He belongs to the family of passive melancholics as Mem and Zin from Khani's poem. Thanks to his own sensitivity Badin becomes familiar to many eccentrics like his Armenian grandpa or Emîral Axa who wanders on the Mahabad's streets repeatedly declaring that "without the sea and the navy there could be no country, no independent state". These odd words repeated in many different contexts are much more than a helpless protest against geographical conditions of Kurdistan. They may also be interpreted in the light of Kurdish magic realism features but mainly as the inspiration taken from Yezidi heritage where the sea or ocean becomes a meaningful element of the creation of the world, to quote from the Hymn of the Creation of the World:

Mihbet avête navê  
Jê peyda kir dû çavê  
Jê heriki pir avê.  
Av ji durê heriki

Bû behra bê seri bê bini  
Bê rê û bê deri  
Êzdanê me ser behrê geri

Êzdanê me sefine çekir  
Însan heywan teyr û tû  
Cot bi cot li sefine siyar kir.

He threw Love into it [into Pearl]  
From it he brought forth two eyes  
A great deal of water flowed from it.

Water flowed from the Pearl  
It became an ocean without end,  
Without beginning  
Without road and without gate

Our God circled over the water.  
Our God made a ship  
Men, animals and all sorts of birds  
He gave a place in the ship, two by two.<sup>16</sup>  
(Kreyenbroek, Rashov 2005, p. 67)

Ocean coming from a Pearl gives both a life-giving, good and annihilating power united by its source – the interior of the Pearl filled up with Love. Flood brought by God (similarly to Christian and Muslim tradition) can be cured by the presence of the ship. It seems that exactly these images create the meaningful background for Emiral Axa's "mad words" which can be regarded rather the desperate demand for the unifying power of Love overcoming contradictions and difficulties. It is its lack or distortion that reveals the structure of *ordo amoris* once again and creates a very powerful idea for Jan Dost's book.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary Kurdish literature written in Kurmanji dialect is undoubtedly rooted deep in the oral, classical and mystical traditions of Kurdistan. Created in modern Kurmanji dialect it draws from the past by adapting motifs and images. That is why it can not be fully understood without the awareness of its rich and

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16 Kurmanji text and the translation of it given after Kreyenbroek&Rashow anthology of Yezidi texts.

diverse background. The changes in literary tradition are represented first of all by the modern forms of narration influenced by Russian, Western, or other Middle Eastern prose (Ahmedzadeh 2004, p. 187-214) and what follows by world literature ideas and immortal questions considering the human lot and conditions. But it is the continuation of its own traditional ideas and motifs that makes Kurdish literature unique and so much more meaningful. The ethical issues are unquestionably one of the most important topics undertaken by Kurdish writers. The *ordo amoris* idea of Max Scheler allows us to bring to light the most significant ethical problems which can be treated as the starting point in contemporary discussions devoted to Kurdish works. However, we should not forget that it is not the wish to patronize that governs the literature. It is rather the unfading will to become closer to human fears, feeling of being lost and lack of self-confidence which influence the everyday life of Kurdish people precluding them sometimes from – as Bettelheim calls it – the mature happiness. Is it, however, the only weak feature of Kurdish people to talk about? We answer: certainly not. By exploring weakness and dark side of the human soul Kurdish writers touch the most universal and deep dimension of literature. That is why their works should be interpreted also in the context of world literary heritage. Seeking foundations for the system of values that could be the reliable platform for individual and social interrelations for the modern day world, Kurdish writers seem to apply the religious and ethical traditions that are hidden in their own cultural heritage of oral, classical and mystical origin. This is the best proof of the fruitful and constant continuity of Kurdish tradition from oral beginnings until modern prose achievements which can be considered in the scope of philosophical theories including Max Scheler's *ordo amoris*. Revealing the hidden hierarchy of values, mostly by pointing out its meaningful distortions has always been one of the most difficult but important and sophisticated tasks of literature. Kurdish experiences in this field are considerable and must be analyzed with adequate attention.

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